

Experts Urge Laws Against Wiretapping

By Paul G. Edwards
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An electronic eavesdropping expert told a Senate subcommittee yesterday that wiretapping is rapidly outgrowing the scope of present laws designed to contain it.

Bernard Spindel of New York urged the Administrative Practice and Procedures subcommittee to draft legislation making all wiretapping illegal, even recording by an individual of his own conversation.

Sen. Edward V. Long (D-Mo.), subcommittee chairman, said before Spindel testified that this new round of hearings on eavesdropping would concentrate on snooping among competing private corporations. The testimony, however, quickly shifted to involvement of police and government agencies in wiretapping.

Both Spindel and the other witness yesterday, William J. Hussey, retired chief investigator for the New York Telephone Co., gave harsh testimony on government operations in the eavesdropping field.

Spindel was tried and acquitted in 1958 of charges that he tapped telephone lines of Teamsters Union official for Union President James R. Hoffa, and Hussey currently is under \$75,000 bond as a material witness in wiretapping-gambling investigations in New York.

Both regaled the subcommittee with anecdotes gleaned from years of tapping and countertapping.

Spindel told the committee of a leading New York bondsman once suspected that his phones were being tapped and asked Spindel to investigate. The witness said that he traced wires to the office of the District Attorney, but when he notified the telephone company he was told that it was their practice to refer such complaints to the District Attorney.

Hussey said that all phone company officials live "in mortal fear of government regulatory agencies" and are reluctant to refuse cooperation with police wiretapping.

He described an informal

understanding between phone officials and local police in New York by which wiretapping aid is supplied by the telephone company in return for assiduous detection of coin box telephone thieves by police.

Hussey said he has been harassed by the Internal Revenue Service because he refused to give it assistance that he thought was improper without a court order.

Both Spindel and Hussey said New York judges are liberal in issuing orders to permit police wiretapping.